

Canadian
Pamphlets

03463

On the national, political and commercial
importance of a railway from Halifax...

Pamph
Econ
Transp
O

ON THE NATIONAL, POLITICAL, AND

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE

OF

A RAILWAY

FROM

HALIFAX TO QUEBEC:

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM IMPORTANT DESPATCHES AND ACTS OF

PARLIAMENT RELATING THERETO.

WITH A MAP

Lacks map

208593 S
2.6.39.

LONDON:

WILLIAM PENNY, 57, LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS.

1858.

THE
LIBRARY
OF THE
MUSEUM
OF
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
AT
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

ON THE
NATIONAL, POLITICAL, AND COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE
OF
A RAILWAY
FROM
HALIFAX TO QUEBEC.

ON glancing over the vast expanse of the North American continent, the eye is directed to the immense extent of British possessions, measuring 4,000,000 square miles, and forming nearly one-eighth of the habitable globe, an extent of country one-fourth larger than the whole territory of the United States. And when we find that throughout the whole of this vast extent of British territory, bordering on the Atlantic Ocean for upwards of 5,000 miles, there is but one safe open seaport accessible at all seasons, and that port the finest in the world, and the nearest to England and to Europe, all the rest being closed by ice for six months of the year, it becomes of the utmost importance, both in a political and commercial point of view, that this port should be connected with the interior by railway. But when we discover that from five to six hundred miles of British territory, of the richest possible description in natural wealth, must be traversed before we arrive at the commencement of railway communication, and for the want of such connection by railway, we are compelled to travel and send our mails and merchandise by *a circuitous route through the United States*, we come to the conclusion, that a link in the great chain of England's communication with her vast western territory is wanting.

Halifax, in Nova Scotia, is the finest harbour on the whole continent of America, and is nearer to Europe by 400 miles than any other open port in that vast area of the New World. It is England's great naval station in the Atlantic Ocean, the packet station of the British and North American royal mail service, and the terminus of the American electric telegraph. It is accessible at all seasons; and, as a harbour,

stands unrivalled. It is distant from Galway 2,184 miles, and from Liverpool 2,466 miles, being about 600 miles nearer than New York, and 400 miles nearer than Boston or Portland. From Halifax to Quebec, by an easy and practicable route for a railway, is about 600 miles, 170 miles of which is under construction, running through a fine fertile country, rich in all the sources of agricultural, mineral, and commercial wealth, and where there is abundant room for all the surplus population of the mother-country, there being in the counties through which the railway would pass upwards of 14,000,000 acres of ungranted Crown lands.

Quebec, the capital of Canada, the key of the river Saint Lawrence and great American lakes, is a focus of commerce not only to the vast British possessions, but also the great northern and western territories of the United States, and from this city extends the greatest and most important internal navigation and railway communication in the world.

But Quebec, during six months of the year, has no outlet to the sea, being closed by ice, and communication with England and with the important provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is, in consequence, carried through the United States, solely for the want of this railway connection with Halifax. The English mails are conveyed through that country, at an annual expense of more than £20,000; but if the proposed line of railway were made, they would be delivered in Quebec before the steamer could reach a port in the United States, and be due at Toronto before the steamer arrived at New York.

The importance of this railway to the British empire in a political and military point of view is immense. The United States has one vast network of railways, extending from the shores of the Atlantic almost to the Rocky Mountains, and from the banks of the Missouri and Mississippi to the shores of the great lakes of the St. Lawrence. She could in the course of three days concentrate an army on the Canadian frontier, and if this should ever occur in the winter, she could lay siege to Quebec, without the possibility of our transporting troops to its relief. By cutting off our postal communications through her own territory, she would leave us to the only resort of an overland route through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to Quebec, at a time of the year when the roads are impassable, for the Gulph of the St. Lawrence is then closed by ice, and its navigation, even in the spring and autumn, is considered so dangerous, that the rates of insurance on shipping are higher than those on vessels to any other part of the world.

We may be told that Quebec is impregnable ; but scientific advancement in the art of warfare has demonstrated that the strongest fortifications cannot withstand a continued and determined siege. With the loss of Quebec, England's vast American possessions are gone for ever, and the British empire is shorn of more than one-half of her fair proportions. A little war with the United States would cost more than the construction of this railway ten times over ; and from the immense military advantages that the formation of it would secure to England, all probability of war would in future be lessened, if not destroyed.

The present position of Canada is calculated to invite aggression, but if this railway were made, troops could be transported at any season of the year from the western coast of Ireland to Halifax in four or five days. After landing there, they could be conveyed over this railway to Quebec, without the possibility of interruption, in twenty-four hours more.

This railway would therefore be to Great Britain a means whereby she could bring her strength to bear in any contest with her growing neighbour ; and it is the *one* great medium alone by which she can on that side of the Atlantic counter-balance the preponderating power of the United States. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that the territory of the United States, vast as it is, is becoming too circumscribed for her enterprising citizens, who have adopted for their motto a verse more comprehensible than classic :

“ No pent-up Utica contracts our powers,
The whole unbounded Continent is ours.”

It therefore becomes imperative that certain railway communications be established and kept open in British North America, at all times and in all seasons. England, be it borne in mind, possesses *the two most important maritime positions in North America—Nova Scotia on the Atlantic, and Vancouver's Island on the Pacific Ocean*, and these it is absolutely essential for her to retain, if she would maintain her supremacy as “ mistress of the seas.”

More than twenty years ago, the Imperial Government considered the connection between Quebec and the Atlantic, by way of Ha'ifax, of such immense political importance, that they proposed making a great military road, at an expense of a million and a half sterling ; but this undertaking was abandoned in favour of Lord Durham's idea of a *great intercolonial railway* ; and in 1847, the Imperial and Provincial Governments caused a survey for the line to be

made by royal engineers, Major Robinson and Captain Henderson, whose report thereon was printed and presented to both houses of Parliament, by command of her Majesty, in February, 1849. That report is of the most favourable description, and has received the highest approval from Earl Grey and other statesmen of great colonial experience. Upon that report the colonial legislature passed the necessary Acts of Parliament, making a free grant of all the Crown lands for ten miles on each side of the line, and an annual grant of £20,000 from each of the three provinces, towards making good the interest of the capital. *In a public despatch from Earl Grey, dated the 14th day of March, 1851, the Imperial Government promised to guarantee the amount necessary for its construction; but on the provinces wishing to press upon the colonial minister the necessity of the Imperial guarantee to other projects besides the Great Trunk line, a delay was caused, and before any satisfactory terms were settled, a change of government took place, and Lord Derby came into power, when the matter had to be re-discussed with him and Sir John Pakington, and by delegates from the three provinces; the result was, that the guarantee was refused to any portion except the Halifax and Quebec line. A difference, however, arose, which brought the negotiations to an abrupt termination, and the result was, the great national interests of the colonies and the British empire were allowed to suffer, and the Canadian terminus was carried to the Atlantic, by constructing a railway, with British capital and assistance from the provincial treasury of Canada, through a foreign state to a foreign port.*

The question now arises, is it prudent that we should longer delay the completion of this great and national undertaking? and, after the vast amount of blood and treasure which we have expended in founding and maintaining this great colony, is it worth keeping? The country for which a Durham pleaded and a Wolfe died, shall we, after a success more brilliant than was ever contemplated by the most enthusiastic colonial statesmen, cease to care about? Shall we still leave undone this one little link, which would ensure her safety and inestimably enhance her greatness and our own profit.

The union and consolidation of the whole British North American provinces is at present being negotiated in Toronto with every hope of success, but which will be entirely futile without railway communication with one another. Major Robinson, in his very able report to the Imperial Government, says in conclusion—

“And if, for great political objects, it ever became necessary or advisable to unite all the British provinces under one Legislative Government, then there will be found on this side of the Atlantic one powerful British state, which, supported by the Imperial power of the mother-country, may bid defiance to all the United States of America.

“The means to the end, the first great step to its accomplishment, is the construction of the Halifax and Quebec Railway.”

The Earl of Elgin, in a despatch to Earl Grey, dated the 28th December, 1848, says in conclusion :—

“I have chiefly insisted on the advantages which the mother-country is likely to derive from the execution of this work, believing that the benefits which it will confer on the colonies are too manifest to require elucidation. I would, however, venture to offer one observation on this head. It is obvious that as soon as railway communication is extended throughout the provinces, a smaller military force than is now requisite will suffice for their protection. But, looking to the anxiety which your lordship has repeatedly expressed that a diminution in the expenditure incurred by Great Britain on this account should be effected at the earliest period, I am prepared to go a step further in this direction, so confident am I that the mere undertaking of the work in question will tend to raise the colonists from the despondency into which recent changes in the commercial policy of the empire has plunged them—to unite the provinces to one another and to the mother country; to inspire them with that consciousness of their own strength, and of the value of the connection with Great Britain, which is their best security against aggression—that I would not hesitate to recommend that an immediate and considerable reduction should take place in the force stationed in Canada in the event of the execution of the Quebec and Halifax Railway being determined on.”

On the 30th May, 1849, the Legislature of Canada passed an Act of Parliament containing the following clause :—

“And whereas the proposed railway between Halifax and Quebec will be a great national work, bringing together the several portions of the British Empire on the continent of North America, and facilitating the adoption of an extensive, wholesome, and effective system of emigration and colonization; and it is right that Canada should render such assistance as her means will admit towards the accomplishment of a work so important, and promising results so beneficial. Be it therefore enacted, that if her Majesty’s Government shall undertake the construction of the said railway, either directly or through the instrumentality of a private company, it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council, on behalf of this province, to undertake to pay yearly, in proportion as the work advances, a sum not exceeding £20,000 sterling, towards making good the deficiency (if any) in the income from the railway, to meet the interest of the sum expended upon it, and to place at the disposal of the Imperial Government all the ungranted lands within the province lying in the line of railway, to the extent of ten miles on each side thereof; and to undertake to obtain, pay for, and place at the disposal of the Imperial Government all the land required within the province for the line of railway, and for proper stations and termini.”

Sir John Harvey, Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia, in a despatch to Earl Grey, dated 6th April, 1849, sent the following address from the Legislative Council, for presentation to the Queen.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

“We, your Majesty’s faithful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Council of Nova Scotia, approach your Majesty with warm attachment to your

Majesty's person and Government, to express our grateful feeling to your Majesty for having submitted the surveys and plans of the contemplated railroad from Quebec to Halifax for the deliberate consideration of the Legislative Council.

"The able report of your Majesty's engineers employed in this survey confirms the views entertained by the Legislative Council, that the accomplishment of this undertaking will develop the resources of your Majesty's noble possessions on this continent, create new elements of prosperity, promote internal improvement, and become a national and indissoluble bond of union with the parent state.

"Impressed with these sentiments, the legislature of this province has passed a law granting, free of expense, a right of way for the railroad, together with all public lands for ten miles of either side thereof; and charging upon the provincial and local revenues of Nova Scotia an annual contribution of £20,000 sterling towards the payment of the interest of the sum required to be expended upon the construction of the work, of which sum a fifth part has been voluntarily tendered by the citizens of Halifax, and the whole will be annually paid to such commissioners as your Majesty may be pleased to appoint after the completion, or satisfactory security for the completion, of such railway, until the traffic thereon shall be sufficient to relieve the provincial government from further contribution.

"Your Majesty's subjects, in this part of your empire, have made preparations to erect an electric telegraph across Nova Scotia, to unite with the lines already established from Metis to Quebec, and Saint John, New Brunswick, to Boston, and thus information will be transmitted in the most rapid manner to the interior of Canada and the United States; and the speedy construction of this projected railway will turn the passenger travelling in the same direction as the most speedy and safe route to the heart of America.

"The projected railway will furnish a safe military road through the centre of British America, open a boundless tract of fertile soil for colonization, facilitate the transport of your Majesty's mails and troops, and will create a new intercourse with Western America through the lakes of the Saint Lawrence to Halifax, a feat surpassed by none on the continent of America.

"May it please your Majesty to give to the subject of this address your gracious consideration, and extend your royal favour to the construction of this national highway through your Majesty's splendid provinces, knitting them together by the strongest ties, and uniting them to the parent state by the bonds of loyalty, affection, and interest.

(Signed) "MICH. TOBIN, President."

The House of Representatives sent a similar address to the above.

Sir Edmund Head, Bart., Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, in a despatch to Earl Grey, dated March 31st, 1849, says—

"MY LORD,

"I have the honour to enclose a copy of a joint address to her Majesty on the subject of railways, adopted by the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly of this province, together with copies of two reports on the same subject, made by the committees of the Legislative Council and Assembly respectively.

"I propose to address your lordship at some length on the matter of the address and the reports, because I think the terms in which the latter are couched are liable to be misunderstood, and because the importance of the subject itself, in relation to the future progress of this colony and to its capability for immigration, requires at my hands some explanation.

"The language of the reports of the committees may appear to be somewhat strong, but I think I can conscientiously assure you that the persons comprising the committees are deeply attached to her Majesty's Government, and if they have erred in the manner of expressing what they meant, it has been from their anxiety on the subject to which the reports relate, &c., &c.

The address to her Majesty is as follows :—

“ MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

“ We, the Legislative Council and Assembly of your Majesty’s Province of New Brunswick, beg leave to approach your Majesty with renewed assurance of our attachment and fidelity to your Majesty’s person and Government.

“ In common with all your Majesty’s subjects in these North American Colonies, we are deeply impressed with the paramount importance of the contemplated line of railway from Halifax to Quebec for the consolidation of these portions of your Majesty’s dominions, and for the preservation of British interests on this continent.

“ Strongly attached to our country and its institutions, we beg leave to submit to your Majesty our humble offering in aid of this great national undertaking.

“ Anticipating that the railway will be constructed by the aid of the Imperial Government, we offer, in consideration thereof, to secure to your Majesty all the ungranted lands through which the road may pass to the extent of ten miles on each side, to be disposed of in such manner as may be deemed most advisable by your Majesty’s Government. And also to secure, at the expense of the province, a sufficient breadth of way and the necessary stations over and upon private property for the use of the said road.

“ And we further pledge ourselves that we will charge upon the general revenues of the province a sum not exceeding £20,000 currency per annum, towards paying the interest upon the capital invested in the said road, to be paid yearly from and after the completion of the said road, and while the same is kept in operation, and to be continued for a term not exceeding twenty years.

“ We would respectfully impress upon your Majesty’s consideration that the quality of the land pledged by us, and its easy access from the United Kingdom, present it as one of the most eligible fields for emigration in any of your Majesty’s dominions.

“ Whenever we shall be advised of the favourable determination of your Majesty’s Government in this matter, we will immediately pass such legislative enactments as may be necessary to carry into effect the pledges made in this our humble and dutiful address.

(Signed)

“ WILLIAM BLACK, P. L. C.

“ J. W. WELLTON, Speaker, House of Assembly.”

The following are extracts from the report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly, referred to in Sir E. Head’s despatch.

“ Viewing the relative positions of the North American Colonies, and the great importance, in a national point of view, of improving the facilities for mutual intercourse, we consider it a matter of the greatest moment for the permanency of British interests in this continent, that a railway should be laid down to connect the lower provinces with the interior of Canada.

“ We believe that no other measure can be devised which will so certainly consolidate the colonies, and perpetuate our connection with Great Britain; while without it, we fear that our position as colonies will be of short duration.

“ We think the plain broad question on this subject is—do the people of England wish to retain the North American colonies, or not? If they do, the Trunk Railway is indispensable, and should be completed at any cost.”

Sir John Harvey, Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia, in a despatch to Earl Grey, dated the 2nd May, 1850, says :

“ MY LORD,

“ I have the honour to enclose, for your lordship’s consideration, a resolution adopted by the Legislative Council of this province on the subject of the projected railway from Halifax to Quebec.

“ The people of this province are very anxious that this great public work should be immediately commenced : and I beg to draw your lordship’s attention to the law passed on the 31st of March, 1849, enacting that it should be lawful for her Majesty to cause five commissioners to be appointed for establishing and constructing such railroad from Halifax to the boundary line of New Brunswick to meet a railroad from Lower Canada through New Brunswick, and also giving power to the Governor, by and with the advice of the Executive Council, to vest in her Majesty ten miles of the Crown lands on each side of the line for the benefit of the railroad, and to raise funds for the construction thereof. And lastly, that the railroad should be under such rules and regulations as shall be established by her Majesty’s Government.

“ A pledge has likewise been given for the sum of £20,000 sterling, to pay the interest on the capital to be expended for the accomplishment of this work.

“ The opinion is very strongly entertained here, my lord, that the construction of this railroad would be one of the most effectual means of defending these possessions of her Majesty, and would assist in preserving the connection with each other and the mother-country, and would develop the *resources*, and invigorate trade and commerce, and promote the permanent prosperity and happiness of her Majesty’s subjects in these portions of the realm.

(Signed) “ J. HARVEY.”

The resolution above referred to is as follows :—

“ *Legislative Council Chamber, 26th March, 1850.*

“ Resolved, that an address be presented to his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, requesting him to call the attention of her Majesty’s Government to the subject of the proposed railroad from Halifax to Quebec, and to urge the great importance of that undertaking to the welfare and prosperity of the province, and to use all the constitutional means in his power to expedite its commencement.

(Signed) “ JOHN C. HALLIBURTON, C.L.C.”

On the 25th April, 1850, the House of Assembly of New Brunswick again addressed her Majesty, from which the following are extracts :—

“ Although we have on a former occasion brought this subject to your Majesty’s notice, yet on such a momentous question, involving, as we sincerely believe it does, the stability and permanency of British interests on this continent, it is our duty to be importunate, and not let the subject rest while there remains any prospect of its success.

“ We have already afforded the best possible proof of our own sincerity, by pledging ourselves to grant a sum of £20,000 a year for twenty years, together with at least 2,000,000 of acres of superior land available for settlement and colonization.

“ Believing your Majesty’s Government sincere in the declaration that these colonies will be retained at all hazards, and that they are viewed as part of the strength of the empire, it is surely a question worthy of the best consideration of your Majesty’s Government, What can be done for the North American Colonies, to prevent their declension, to give them strength and consistency, and thereby retain confidence in the Imperial Government ? ”

“ To this important question we are prepared to answer, that no other measure will so certainly produce the desired effects as the railway from Halifax to Quebec.

“ The sum of £60,000 being already guaranteed by Canada, Nova Scotia,

and this province, we are led to hope that if your Majesty's Government would procure from the Imperial Parliament a grant of £1,000,000 sterling in aid of the undertaking, the work would be shortly commenced and successfully prosecuted, &c., &c.

(Signed)

“ J. W. WELDON, Speaker of Assembly.”

On the 10th March, 1851, the following letter⁷ was addressed to the Hon. Joseph Howe, who had been selected by the Government of Nova Scotia to impress the importance of the Halifax and Quebec Railway upon the Imperial Government.

“ *Downing-street, March 10th, 1851.*

“ SIR,

“ I am directed by Earl Grey to inform you that he is at length enabled to communicate to you the decision of her Majesty's Government on the application for assistance towards the construction of the projected railway through Nova Scotia, contained in your letters of the 25th of November and the 16th of January last.

“ You are already aware, from the repeated conversations which you have had with Lord Grey, of the strong sense entertained by his lordship and his colleagues, of the extreme importance, not only to the colonies directly interested, but to the empire at large, of providing for the construction of a railway by which a line of communication may be established on the British territory between the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada, and that various plans which have been suggested for the accomplishment of this object have undergone the most attentive consideration.

“ It appears from Sir John Harvey's despatch of August 29th, 1850, as well as from your letters and the verbal communications you have made to Lord Grey, that the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia, fully relying on the concurrence of the Legislature, is desirous of undertaking the construction of that part of the projected line which would pass through that province, and proposes to obtain for that purpose a loan of £800,000, which is the estimated expense of the work. The assistance which Lord Grey understands you to apply for, in behalf of the province, is that the payment of the interest of a loan to this amount should be guaranteed by the Imperial Parliament, the effect of which would be that the money might be raised on terms much more favourable than would be otherwise required by the lenders.

“ I am directed to inform you that her Majesty's Government are prepared to recommend to Parliament that this guarantee should be granted, or that the money required should be advanced from the British Treasury on the conditions which I will now proceed to state.

“ In the first place, as her Majesty's Government are of opinion that they would not be justified in asking Parliament to allow the credit of this country to be pledged for any object not of great importance to the British Empire as a whole (and they do not consider that the projected railway would answer this description, unless it should establish a line of communication between the three British Provinces), it must be distinctly understood that the work is not to be commenced, nor is any part of the loan, for the interest of which the British Treasury is to be responsible, to be raised, until arrangements are made with the provinces of Canada and New Brunswick, by which the construction of a line of railway passing wholly through British territory, from Halifax or Quebec or Montreal, shall be provided for to the satisfaction of her Majesty's Government.

“ In order that such arrangements may be made, her Majesty's Government will undertake to recommend to Parliament that the like assistance shall be rendered to those provinces as to Nova Scotia, in obtaining loans for the construction of their respective portions of the work. If it should appear that by leaving it to each province to make that part of the line passing through its own territory,

the proportion of the whole cost of the work which would fall upon any one province would exceed its proportion of the advantage to be gained by it, then the question is to remain open for future consideration, whether some contribution should not be made by the other provinces towards that part of the line : but it is to be clearly understood that the whole cost of the line is to be provided for by loans raised by the provinces in such proportions as may be agreed upon with the guarantee of the Imperial Parliament.

"The manner in which the profits to be derived from the railway, when completed, are to be divided between the provinces, will also remain for future consideration.

"You will observe, that I have stated that the line is to pass entirely through British territory ; but her Majesty's Government do not require that the line should necessarily be that recommended by Major Robinson and Captain Henderson. If the opinion which is maintained by many persons well qualified to form a judgment is correct, that a shorter and better line may be formed through New Brunswick, it will of course be preferred, and there will be sufficient time for determining this question while the earlier part of the line is in progress.

"It is also to be understood that her Majesty's Government will by no means object to its forming part of the plan which may be determined upon, that it should include a provision for establishing a communication between the projected railways and the railways of the United States. Any deviation from the line recommended by Major Robinson and Captain Henderson must, however, be subject to the approval of her Majesty's Government.

"It will further be required that the several provincial legislatures should pass laws, making the loans which they are to raise a first charge upon the provincial revenues, after any existing debts and payments on account of the civil lists settled on her Majesty by laws now in force : and also that permanent taxes shall be imposed (or taxes to continue in force till the debt shall be extinguished) sufficient to provide for the payment of the interests and sinking fund of the loans proposed to be raised after discharging the above prior claims. It will further be necessary that the expenditure of the money raised under the guarantee of the Imperial Parliament shall take place under the superintendence of commissioners appointed by her Majesty's Government, and armed with sufficient power to secure the due application of the funds so raised to their intended object. The commissioners so appointed are not, however, to interfere with the arrangement of the provincial governments, except for the above purpose.

"The right of sending troops, stores, and mails along the line, at reasonable rates, must likewise be secured.

"If, on the part of the Government of Nova Scotia, you should express your concurrence in the above proposal, Lord Grey will immediately direct the Governor-General of the British North American Provinces to communicate with the Lieutenant-Governors of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, who will also be directed to bring the subject under the consideration of their respective Executive Councils, in order that, if they should be prepared to join in carrying the undertaking into effect on the terms proposed, the details of the arrangements between the provinces may be settled, and the sanction of the legislatures obtained for the plan, so that it may with as little delay as possible be submitted for the approval of Parliament.

"Before, however, the proposed measures can be so submitted to Parliament, it is proper to observe there are some of the questions affecting the pecuniary relations between the mother-country and the colonies which will require to be considered ; but as these questions have little, if any, reference to Nova Scotia, it is not necessary that they should be further adverted to in this letter.

"I am directed to add that Lord Grey thinks it unnecessary that any measures should be taken by her Majesty's Government to encourage the establishment of steam-vessels for the accommodation of the emigrants of the humbler classes, which is one of the subjects to which you have called his attention.

"If there should be a demand for such vessels, Lord Grey has no doubt that they will speedily be supplied by private enterprise ; indeed, he has been in-

formed that ships of large size, intended for the conveyance of emigrants, and furnished with auxiliary steam-power, are already building, both in this country and in America; and if by undertaking the projected railway a demand for labour is created in the British provinces, and a large extent of fertile land is opened for the occupation of settlers, these circumstances cannot fail to lead to an extension and improvement of the means now afforded for the conveyance of emigrants to these provinces [a further reference is made as to convict labour].

(Signed) "B. HAWES."

On the 14th March, 1851, Earl Grey sent the following despatch to the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Governor-General of the British North American Provinces.

Downing Street, 14th March, 1851.

"MY LORD,

"From the correspondence which I have already had with your lordship on the subject of the projected railroad from Halifax to Quebec, you are well aware that, although her Majesty's Government have not hitherto been enabled to take any steps towards the execution of that work, it is an undertaking which they have long earnestly desired to see accomplished, as they believe it to be one calculated very greatly to advance the commercial and political interests, both of the British provinces in North America, and of the mother-country. It is therefore with great satisfaction that I have now to acquaint your lordship that I have reason to hope that the time is at length come when this great national enterprize may be undertaken with advantage, if there still exists (as I am assured there does) as strong a desire to promote it on the part of the inhabitants of Canada and New Brunswick as they formerly expressed, and as the people of Nova Scotia have again recently manifested.

"2. I enclose for your lordship's information a copy of a despatch, addressed to me in the course of the last autumn, by Sir John Harvey, introducing to me Mr. Howe, a member of the Government of Nova Scotia; and also copies of two letters I have received from that gentleman, and of the answer which has by my direction been returned to him. Your lordship will perceive from these papers, that the proposal made by Mr. Howe, on behalf of the province of Nova Scotia, and to which her Majesty's Government have thought it their duty so far to accede as to undertake, on certain conditions, to recommend it for the sanction of Parliament, is to the effect that the credit of this country should be employed to enable the Provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, to raise, upon advantageous terms, the funds necessary for the construction of the proposed railway, just as Canada has already been enabled by similar assistances, to construct the canals by which she has lately completed the most extensive and perfect system of inland navigation which exists in the world. Although her Majesty's Government are of opinion that great caution ought to be observed in pledging the credit of the British Treasury in aid of loans raised by the colonies, they regard the work now in contemplation as being (like the Saint-Lawrence Canals) of so much importance to the whole empire as to justify them in recommending to Parliament that some assistance should be given towards its construction; nor is there any mode of affording such assistance which has been hitherto suggested, which appears on the whole so little burthensome to the mother-country, and at the same time of so much real service to the colonies, as that which is now proposed.

"3. In coming to the decision that Parliament should be invited to give this support to the projected railway, her Majesty's Government have not failed to bear in mind that, by enabling the North American provinces to open this great line of communication, it may fairly be assumed that a powerful stimulus will be given to their advance in wealth and population; and that the consequent increase in their resources will render it possible for them to relieve the mother-country sooner, and more completely than would otherwise be practicable, from charges now borne by it on account of these colonies. In another despatch of

this date, I have informed your lordship that, in the judgment of her Majesty's Government, the British colonies ought to be required, as they become capable of doing so, to take upon themselves not only the expenses of their civil government, but a portion at all events of those incurred for their protection; and I have pointed out to you, that the British North American Provinces, and especially Canada, have now reached such a stage in their progress, that the charges for which Parliament is called upon to provide on their account ought to be rapidly diminished. The construction of the proposed railway would greatly contribute to promote this important object. By opening new districts for settlement, and by the demand for labour which will be created during the progress of the work, the projected railway cannot fail to increase the wealth and population of these provinces, while, by affording a rapid and easy communication between them, it will enable them to afford to each other far greater mutual support and assistance than they now can in any difficulty or danger to which they may be exposed.

"4. Your lordship will not fail to observe, from the letter which has been addressed to Mr. Howe, that the assistance which it is proposed to grant to the provinces towards the construction of the proposed railway is to be contingent on provision being made for opening a complete line of communication from Halifax to Quebec, or Montreal; it is necessary, therefore, to ascertain whether Canada and New Brunswick are ready to join with Nova Scotia in raising the capital required for the work in the manner proposed, and if so, in what proportion each province is to become responsible for the expense incurred. The question whether it will be advisable for these two provinces to join in the construction of the projected railway, if they should be enabled, by the assistance of Parliament, to raise the required capital at a low rate of interest, is one for the consideration of their respective legislatures; but, so far as I have the means of forming a judgment on the subject, I should anticipate that their decision would be in favour of doing so. I infer that this is probable, not less from what I have learned of the actual state of public opinion on this subject in the provinces, than from the view which I take of their interest in the work. Though I can well believe that there would be much room for doubting whether the railway would pay as a mercantile speculation to a company looking to traffic only for its remuneration, the case is very different when it is regarded as a public undertaking. When viewed in this light, the various indirect advantages which cannot fail to arise to the provinces from possessing such improved means of communication must be considered, as well as the very great additional value which would be conferred on a vast extent of public lands which are now comparatively worthless. This is a source of profit from which no advantage can in general accrue to the contractors of railways in countries where the soil has been appropriated by individuals; on the contrary, in these countries the purchase of land is not one of the least important items of the expense to be incurred in such undertakings; but where, as in parts of Canada and New Brunswick, a great part of the territory to be traversed by a railway is still unappropriated, and the land may be sold by the public, the increased value given to it by being thus rendered accessible may render it advantageous to construct a railway, though the traffic is not expected to do more at first than pay the working expenses.

"5. If these considerations should induce the legislatures of the three provinces to combine in undertaking the projected railway, the terms on which they are to co-operate with each other for that object will have to be settled; and in coming to such an arrangement, various questions of great difficulty and importance will require to be considered. For instance, it is probable that when the line is completed, the traffic will be far more remunerative at the two extremities than in the more central portion of it; while, at the same time, the expense of construction would, from the nature of the country, be precisely higher where the traffic returns would be lowest; so that if each province were required to pay for the formation of the line through its own territory, and to receive the returns from the traffic through the same, it would follow, that while the expense to New Brunswick would be the greatest, its receipts would be the smallest. On the other hand, as I have just observed, one of the most important sources of profit from the construction of such a railway as that now in contemplation would arise from the sale

of land, of which the value would be increased by the work : and it appears from the papers before me, that New Brunswick would probably derive a greater profit from that source than the two sister provinces. Whether the result upon the whole would be, that each province, considering these various circumstances, ought to take upon itself the construction of the railway through its own territory, or whether, on the contrary, any one should be assisted by the others, is a point on which I have not the means of forming a judgment ; and I would suggest to you, that the best course, with a view of arriving at some practical result, would be, that a deputation from the Executive Councils of the two lower provinces should proceed to the seat of Government in Canada, in order to confer with your lordship and with your Council, for the purpose of coming to some agreement upon the subject ; which, after being approved by the legislatures of the several provinces, might be submitted for the sanction of Parliament.

"6. It does not appear to me that if such a conference should be held, it need occupy any very great length of time, or that much difficulty would arise in coming to an arrangement for the construction and working of the projected railway, by which the expense of the undertaking on the one hand, and the advantages to be derived from it on the other, might be fairly apportioned between the different provinces. Hereafter I may, probably, be enabled to offer some suggestions as to the manner in which this might be accomplished ; but, at present, I have only to add that I shall transmit copies of this despatch to Sir Edmund Head and to Sir John Harvey, with instructions to them to communicate with your lordship, without delay, on the important subject to which it relates ; and it will give me the highest satisfaction if the result of these communications should be the undertaking of a work which, if completed, cannot, I believe, fail to add greatly to the prosperity of the British provinces in North America, and, at the same time, to give additional strength to the ties which connect them with each other, and with the British empire.—I am, &c.,

(Signed) "GREY."

Earl Cathcart, late Governor-General of British North America, in a letter dated March 31st, 1851, says :—

"The very warm interest I naturally feel for the prosperity and welfare of the British possessions in North America, arising from the personal knowledge and experience I had the opportunity of acquiring during the period of my official residence in Canada, fully enables me to appreciate the inestimable advantages both to themselves and the mother-country of thus uniting Canada with the lower province, and by this means securing to the former a direct communication, perfectly independent of the United States, with England, through the port of Halifax, which is accessible at all seasons."

Earl Grey, in another letter, dated June 12th, 1851, to the Hon. Joseph Howe, in reference to this railway, says :—

"I feel very sanguine of the ultimate assent of New Brunswick to the measure as proposed, and that we shall succeed in getting this most important work, destined, as I believe, to effect a change in the civilised world, accomplished."

Yet, after all the amount of valuable evidence up to 1851, which has been but briefly quoted, in support of the national, political, and military importance of this undertaking, the Halifax and Quebec railway yet remains to be made ; although, since that time, the imports and exports of the British North American provinces have increased from a total of eight millions, to twenty-five millions sterling ; the population doubled ; 2,000 miles of railway constructed

westward from Quebec ; a rate of progress as an agricultural country unparalleled in the history of nations. And although Canada has obtained an European reputation for her resources, her enterprise, and her advancement, and justly laid claim to the title of being the "brightest jewel in the British Crown," we are still in the humiliating position of being dependent upon the will of a foreign country for our communications with her, solely through the want of this railway.

There is at the present time a trunk line of railway from Quebec to St. Paul's, in the territory of Minesota, a distance of 1,600 miles, being half across the vast continent of America, and a projected line of railway in continuation to the Puget Sound in the Pacific ocean, about 1,600 miles more. There is also a projected line of railway from the north shore of Lake Superior, through the Red River and Saskatchewan country, terminating at the mouth of Fraser River in the Straits of Fuca, on the Pacific, passing entirely through British territory, intersecting a coal-field 1,000 miles long by 150 wide, and also the gold mines of Fraser River, recently discovered, surpassing even in richness those of California. England on the completion of the Halifax and Quebec Railway, will possess the two most important maritime positions at both termini, Nova Scotia on the Atlantic, with the unrivalled harbour of Halifax, with her immense mineral resources of coal and iron, and rich fisheries. And Vancouver's Island on the Pacific with the magnificent harbour of Esquimault (the only one upon the coast for 3,000 miles, excepting San Francisco)—Vancouver also possessing immense mineral resources of iron and coal, rich fisheries, and fine timber, of which island the Right Honourable Edward Ellice, in his evidence before a select committee of the House of Commons of last session, speaks as follows :—

"It is a kind of England attached to the continent of America. I think it should not only be on the ordinary system of English colonies, but that it should be the principal station of your naval force in the Pacific. It is an island in which there is every kind of timber fit for naval purposes. It is the only good harbour (and it is an excellent harbour) to the northward of San Francisco, as far north as Sitka, the Russian settlement. You have, in Vancouver's Island, fine timber in every situation, and coal enough for your whole navy. The climate is wholesome—very like that of England ; the coast abounds with fish of every description ; in short, there is every advantage in the island of Vancouver to make it one of the first colonies and best settlements of England. Political questions are connected with making a settlement in this quarter which I will not enter into."

The colonies of British North America, already politically organized, comprise about 500,000 square miles ; but beyond

these flourishing colonies, extending to the Pacific Ocean, there is an immense region, as large as Europe, belonging to the British Crown, and the whole of this territory adapted for settlement to the east of the Rocky Mountains is about to be annexed to Canada, and to the west to Vancouver's Island, and thrown open for colonization, and is estimated at 500,000 square miles.

The river St. Lawrence, rising at the head of Lake Superior, flows through Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario (containing an area of 100,000 square miles), to the ocean, a distance of 2,200 miles, and with Lake Michigan washes a coast of about 5,000 miles; the total value of the annual imports and exports of the lake basin being estimated at forty millions sterling.

The many noble rivers, its tributaries, are too numerous to mention in this condensed form; one of them, however, the Ottawa, is 780 miles long, as large and as beautiful as the Rhine, and drains a country of 80,000 square miles, admirably adapted for the purposes of agriculture and settlement, and capable of numbering a population of 8,000,000 souls. There is upwards of 4,000 miles of internal navigation sufficient for vessels of large tonnage, those of 300 tons can go from Liverpool to the head of Lake Superior. There has been expended upon improving this vast internal navigation, by the construction of ship canals, upwards of four millions sterling.

Mr. Hogan, in his Prize Essay on Canada, says,—

“Looking at the St. Lawrence in connection with the regions I have named, and of which it is the natural outlet to the ocean, it is impossible not to see that nature has apportioned its magnitude to the necessities of the vast territories which it waters. There is not in the world two thousand miles of navigation which afford so many objects of interest to the poor man, or so many subjects of pleasurable contemplation for the good one, as the St. Lawrence, and the lakes, from the gulf to their source. Without vauntingly claiming an advantage for the St. Lawrence, it would certainly be doing nature's grandest outlet to the ocean an injustice, to admit that it suffered in the slightest degree by a comparison with the Erie Canal, or the time it may be used.”

There are upwards of 2,000 miles of railways completed at an expense of twenty millions sterling.

The climate of this immense country is favourable, and the rate of mortality lower than in any other known country. The soil is extremely fertile, and not surpassed by the most favoured counties in England, and as a wheat-producing country, is fast becoming one of the most important in the world the growth of wheat having increased 400 per cent. during the last ten years. She produces upwards of thirty-five million bushels annually.

Her territory is adorned with the most magnificent and inexhaustible forests of timber, of which she exports annually to the value of from four to five millions. The copper mines on the shores of Lake Huron and Superior, and the coal-fields and iron ore of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, proclaim her mineral wealth to be of the richest possible description; and for her splendid display of minerals of all descriptions at the Paris Exhibition, the grand medal of honour was awarded to Sir William Logan, the Canadian Provincial Geologist. She possesses all the wealth of the fisheries fronting upon a coast of 5,000 miles.

It would indeed be marvellous if a country belonging to the British Crown, possessing such inestimable natural resources, had not attracted to her shores an immense population from the mother-country. There is settled throughout this vast territory a population of upwards of three millions of the most industrious, enterprising, and prosperous people on the face of the globe, and whose rate of increase is such, that in thirty years they will, it is calculated, equal the present population of Great Britain.

The assessed and assessable property, exclusive of the public lands or minerals, amounts to £120,000,000, or £40 to each man, woman, and child; their imports are upwards of £15,000,000, and their exports £10,000,000. They have a small public debt, not exceeding £6,000,000, and an annual revenue of two millions, and as some test of their integrity and credit, the Government bonds of the province of Canada are at a premium of £15 per cent. in London at the present time.

They own vessels measuring 600,000 tons, and receive a million sterling annually for ships built in the colonies.

The city of Toronto, which in 1793 was occupied by one single Indian wigwam, in 1857 contained a population of 50,000 souls; the value of property in the city being estimated at six millions and a half. The city of Hamilton, which was a few years ago a small village, now contains a population of 30,000. The site upon which the city of Ottawa stands, with its population of 12,000 (just selected as the capital of Canada), was thirty years ago sold for eighty pounds, but which has now become of such importance, that on its becoming known in London that it was selected as the future capital, the shares of the Canada Company advanced, in one day on the Stock Exchange, from £120 to £170, merely because they possessed a tract of land in the vicinity.

This extraordinary progress, of which we have but given a brief outline, illustrates the powers of a mind that could

grasp at the magnitude, and foretel the destinies of this great country. Lord Durham, in his report on the British North American Colonies, says in conclusion :

“ These interests are, indeed, of great magnitude ; and on the course which your Majesty and your Parliament may adopt with respect to the North American colonies will depend the future destinies not only of the million and a half of your Majesty’s subjects who at present inhabit those provinces, but of that vast population which those ample and fertile territories are fit and destined hereafter to support. No portion of the American continent possesses greater natural resources for the maintenance of large and flourishing communities. An almost boundless range of the richest soil still remains unsettled, and may be rendered available for the purposes of agriculture. The wealth of inexhaustible forests of the best timber in America, and of extensive regions of the most valuable minerals, have as yet been scarcely touched. Along the whole line of sea-coast, around each island, and in every river, are to be found the greatest and richest fisheries in the world. The best fuel and the most abundant water-power are available for the coarser manufactures, for which an easy and certain market will be found. Trade with the continent is favoured by the possession of a large number of safe and spacious harbours ; long, deep, and numerous rivers, and vast inland seas, supply the means of easy intercourse, and the structure of the country generally affords the utmost facility for every species of communication by land. Unbounded materials of agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing industry are there. It depends upon the present decision of the Imperial Legislature to determine for whose benefit they are to be rendered available. The country which has founded and maintained these colonies, at a vast expense of blood and treasure, may justly expect its compensation in turning their unappropriated resources to the account of its own redundant population. They are the rightful patrimony of the English people—the ample appanage which God and nature have set aside in the new world for those whose lot has assigned them but insufficient portions in the old.”

Such advantages, however, are rarely or ever conferred by nature without their being coupled with what both taxes the skill and calls for the exercise of energy and judgment ; it is so with the navigation of the St. Lawrence.

As we before stated, the only outlet to the sea for the magnificent internal navigation with this great and prosperous country is by Quebec, and the Atlantic terminus to this immense railway communication (except through the United States) is Quebec ; and had she but a free and uninterrupted course to the sea at all seasons, she would enjoy the most favourable and important position of any city in the world. But for six months she becomes closed by ice, and there is but *one* mode of obviating this great difficulty, and that is by the construction of the railway to Halifax. It may seem strange, independent of the importance of this great Trunk line, that the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have not had their share of railways, but with one small exception, bordering on the State of Maine, they are entirely without such a means of transit. Yet from their geographical position, the fertility of their soil, and the richness of their forests and minerals, no one would doubt that had they belonged to the United States, they would, many years ago,

have been intersected by railways, their lands settled, and their resources developed. But the interests of these provinces and of the nation have been sacrificed to the quarrels of, and it is said, the cupidity of, individuals. The railway route from Halifax to Quebec is 635 miles, but the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada have under construction a continuation of their line from Quebec to Trois Pistoles, reducing the distance at that end by 114 miles. The Government of Nova Scotia are also constructing a line of railway from Halifax to Truro, 55 miles, reducing the distance necessary to complete the link between Halifax and Quebec to 465 miles. There is no tunnelling, and the greater portion is level, or under gradients of 20 feet per mile. It is far removed from the boundaries of the United States, and without the possibility of interruption in a time of war.

Descending from the national importance of this line of railway, and looking upon it merely as a commercial undertaking for investment, it contains all the elements of success to pay a large dividend upon the capital.

Major Robinson estimated the total cost of construction at £3,000,000, or about £7,000 per mile; and as the best proof that this estimate was ample, a line of railway from St. Andrews to Woodstock, on the western border of New Brunswick, similar in many respects, has been constructed, and pronounced to be the best finished line in America, at about half that cost.

The contemplated revenue may be estimated as follows; and from analogy with those railways in Canada in full operation is much underrated:—

Proportion of population contributing to the business of the railway, 600,000 at 15s. each	£450,000	
Less 50 per cent., working expenses	£225,000	
		£225,000
Mails		25,000
		£250,000

or equal to more than eight per cent. per annum. There is also the free and absolute gift of all the Crown lands for ten miles on each side of the line, and estimated at five million acres, and a free gift of all the private lands necessary for the railway and termini; and the annual guarantee of £60,000

from the three provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. In addition to which, without taking too sanguine a view of the assistance that may be rendered by the Imperial Government, it may be safely estimated, by what the Government have already promised, that they would make the guarantee equivalent to four per cent. and pay £50,000 annually for the conveyance of mails, military stores, and troops.

The line runs through boundless fields of coal and iron, the only ones on the Atlantic side of the Alleghany mountains. The present annual consumption of coals in Halifax is about 30,000 chaldrons; the formation of this railway would effect a saving of 10s. per chaldron in the carriage, enabling it to be sold in Halifax at 15s.; the increase consequent upon this would be immense both for home consumption, exportation, and the trans-atlantic steamers.

Halifax, the one termini, with its imports and exports of three millions, and Quebec, the other, with its ten millions; and as Halifax has the advantage of a lower rate of insurance on shipping, equal at some seasons to 8 per cent., and an open port, vessels from England would make three voyages there in place of two to Quebec, an immense traffic would therefore be attracted over this line. All the more valuable kinds of merchandize would, of necessity, go by it.

The average cost of conveying a barrel of flour from Montreal to Liverpool is 5s. 1d.; by the railway from Quebec to Halifax it will be 2s. 2d., and from thence to Liverpool 2s. 9d., making 4s. 11d.; and as the cost of a barrel of flour from the lakes to Quebec would not exceed the "tolls" of the Erie Canal, this route would be the cheapest for heavy goods for both the Western States and Canada. But in the event of an interruption with the United States, the amount of traffic that would be thrown upon this line would be incalculable.

This railway, therefore, presents all these important features:

A work of the utmost national, political, and military importance.

The pledged support and pecuniary assistance of the Imperial Government. And the gift of all private lands necessary for the railway and termini.

The free grant of five millions of acres of Crown lands to aid its construction.

The guarantee of £60,000 per annum from the three provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

The two most important termini in British North America.

Intersecting immense mineral, agricultural, and commercial resources, and a numerous and enterprising population.

And pre-eminently commanding the through traffic of that line of railway destined to become not only the great high road and most direct route to the immense western territories of America, but to California, China, and the East Indies, reducing the distance from London to Pekin to 9,991 miles, and a journey of 30 days, as follows:—

	miles.		days.
London to Liverpool	210	. . .	1
Liverpool to Halifax	2,466	. . .	8
Halifax to Quebec	635	. . .	1
Quebec to Montreal	180	} . . .	1
Montreal to Ottawa	120		
Ottawa to Pembroke	100		
Pembroke to Georgian Bay	180		
Georgian Bay to Pigeon River, Lake Superior	500	. . .	2
Lake Superior to Fraser River, Fucas Straits	1,500	. . .	2
Fucas Straits to Pekin	4,100	. . .	15
	9,991		30

211-12-13-14, GRESHAM HOUSE,

OLD BROAD STREET, E.C.



